

**THE DIGITAL PIANO ACCORDION: A MODERN INSTRUMENT
FOR TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY
PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS**

by

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Declaration

This exegesis contains the results of research carried out at the University of Tasmania Conservatorium of Music between 2010 and 2012. It contains no material that, to my knowledge, has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution. I declare that this exegesis is my own work and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where clear acknowledgement or reference has been made in the text.

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To my Grandfather

Donald McDonell

(1915 – 1998)

ABSTRACT

This research investigates traditional and contemporary performance contexts using a modern, digital piano accordion. It has been conducted through a series of performances that highlight idiomatic playing styles, the adaptation of playing techniques for digital instruments, those circumstances where the use of a digital instrument is most convincing, and my own skills as an accordionist. Recordings of these performances are included with the accompanying exegesis, which examines repertoire, playing styles and techniques traditionally associated with the stradella accordion. In addition, the exegesis addresses questions concerning the degree to which the digital instrument serves as a replacement for an acoustic accordion, the use of non-reeded sounds to enhance performance outcomes and opportunities, and the identification of performance contexts that validate the use of a digital instrument.

A variety of potential solo and group performance contexts that explore the use of reeded and non-reeded or electronic sounds are promoted, leading to discussions of technical and aesthetic considerations that guide and refine performance practice where a digital instrument is used. Research findings show that in many respects the digital instrument is a plausible replacement for its acoustic counterpart, and that performance applications are context-driven; their success dependent on the manner in which they confirm and enhance the identity of the piano accordion as an instrument in its own right.